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SUMMARY

SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP IN NEW IMMIGRANT SITUATIONS:

Ghanaian mainline Protestant Churches in Germany and the Netherlands

The central place of leadership in the newly emerged migrant African Christian communities in Europe gave rise to this study. The circumstances of these Churches and the central role of their leaders require that the theological concept of 'Spiritual leadership' among them is explored for a better understanding of how they negotiate the peculiar challenges they encounter in their new context in Europe. The study focuses on two Ghanaian mainline Protestant Church denominations in Germany and the Netherlands: the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG) and The Methodist Church Ghana (MCG). Those Churches are different from the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches, which have been present in Europe longer and are more familiar to Europeans. They are different because they are churches that were, more or less, exported to Africa from Europe by Missionaries in the 19th Century.

The study finds out that even though these Churches established in Europe appear to have developed a life of their own, the flow of people and ideas from Ghana to Europe, which continues to be significant keep alive African indigenous spiritual concerns among their members. Therefore, these migrant Ghanaian Christians in Europe essentially hold the same religious worldviews as their folks back home. However, their immigrant situation also poses for them, far challenges that are unique. Such challenges include a deep sense of insecurity, want of warmth, care, friendship and affection. Since they are mostly economic refugees detached from their families and homeland, they are prone to experiencing feelings of isolation and depression in their constant struggle to find shelter for themselves, especially, in the case of the 'undocumented' amongst them. In consequence of their peculiar circumstances the study observes that in their search for a spiritual home in their host European societies, three factors are extremely important:

- A kind of Christianity that addresses itself to needs perceived as tied to their traditional African worldviews. Such needs include healing and deliverance, spiritual security in terms of protection from spiritual forces and then physical security which is understood to be related to their material and social well-being.
- A contextualized formal worship setting perceived to be more suited to their needs as African Christians.
- A spiritual home where they could enjoy Christian love and care, a sense of belonging and acceptance and of course a place where dignity and self-worth brought from home could be expressed naturally.

The study argues that what is understood by these African Christians as 'spiritual leadership' is crucial to meeting the aforementioned needs and ensuring the future survival of these

communities in Europe. Spiritual leadership as understood by these African Christians is found to involve three ingredients – personal spirituality, the ability to effectively guide ecclesial practices, and the ability to empower lay-leaders and members of the congregation for mission and church growth. These three ingredients are developed into a three standard-ingredient set of models for evaluating and predicting the effectiveness or otherwise of leadership in African migrant congregations in Europe.

The study establishes that leadership practices should be the kinds that take both their African/Ghanaian religious worldviews and immigrant situations into consideration if they would make a strong impression on these Ghanaian Christians. In essence, these practices should be seen to meaningfully address their existential needs such as divine healing and deliverance, economic and material security, as well as spiritual security in terms of protection from spiritual forces. The study demonstrates that existential needs like healing and deliverance when employed as integral part of pastoral responsibilities of leaders recovers for these Ghanaian Christians important dimensions of the Christian message of salvation which encompasses spiritual and physical well-being.

The thesis concludes that essentially, ‘Spiritual leadership’ deemed to be appreciably dynamic in these immigrant situations is the type which equips and ensures that their congregations are fashioned to constitute dynamic environments in which people find a sense of belonging and acceptance, Christian love and care, friendship, empowerment, spiritual vitality and fulfilment. It is the kind that is committed to do all that it takes to ensure the promotion of a harmonious community within which the spirituality of the members is enhanced, their communal welfare catered for and their indigenous spiritual concerns, such as healing, deliverance and protection from the activities of evil spirits catered for.

The *relevance* of the thesis lies in its contribution it makes to the theological discussion of the critical issue of Spiritual leadership and the important role it plays in new immigrant situations. It offers a contribution to the on-going global discussion on migration by providing leads to a clearer understanding of the role religion plays in it. The study is also set to deepen academic reflection on the role of religious minorities in the process of spiritual renewal of the lives of their membership, which definitely has a bearing on their social lives, for the betterment of the communal life of their host societies. Finally, we anticipate that the findings of this study will inform the mission policy of both the mainline Protestant Churches in Ghana and their partner Churches in Europe who may either be already involved or seek future partnership in missions among migrant Ghanaian/African Christians in Europe or elsewhere. It will inform them particularly as to the type of spiritual leaders that are needed to serve in such new immigrant situations.

Chapter 1 provides the background information necessary for a clear understanding of the religious context of Ghanaian mainline Protestant Christians in Germany and the Netherlands. It begins with an overview of the demographic, historical, political and socio-economic developments of Ghana. The final section of the chapter is devoted to a general overview of Ghanaian migration as related to these developments.

Chapter 2 focuses on the History of mainline Churches in Ghana. The first part, under the sub-heading: *Mission history of mainline Churches in Ghana*, traces the history of Christianity in Ghana. In the second part headed, *History of mainline Protestant Churches in Ghana*, we have limited our discussions to two of the mainline Protestant Churches in Ghana namely, the PCG (Presbyterian Church of Ghana) and the MCG (Methodist Church Ghana) whose overseas Churches in Germany and in the Netherlands are the focus of this study.

Chapter 3 examines the emergence of Ghanaian mainline Protestant Churches in Germany and the Netherlands. An attempt is made to trace the history of the formation of these churches, looking at both the spiritual and structural developments of these congregations.

Chapter 4 identifies the challenges that confront the GMPCs; challenges which are seen to evolve mostly from the spiritual sensibilities of the Ghanaian mainline Christians in their immigrant situations. The chapter illustrates that in view of the existential and contextual needs of these immigrants a new type of Spiritual leadership is required in such immigrant situations. It should be the type which is *spiritually and functionally vibrant* and thus committed to do all that it takes to ensure the ministry relevance of these Churches.

Chapter 5 is an elaboration of the first of the three ingredients of Spiritual leadership, first mentioned in the introductory chapter, *personal spirituality*. It explores the kind of spiritual and moral qualities required of the spiritual leader in such immigrant situations, which are likely to influence ministry fruitfulness and for that reason ensure the survival of the GMPCs.

Chapter 6 takes up the remaining two ingredients of spiritual leadership, which are the ability to guide ecclesial practices and the ability to empower lay-leaders and the general membership for mission and Church growth. It discusses within these models, leadership and pastoral activities, including pastoral care and counselling, healing and deliverance ministry, worship and discipleship as well as the promotion of communal welfare in the context of *koinonia*.

Chapter 7 is the concluding chapter, and an attempt is made to draw together the various strands of discussions. It revisits the research question and discusses issues within the framework of the proposed three standard-ingredient set of models for evaluating and predicting the effectiveness or otherwise of leadership in African migrant congregations in Europe.